[0019] The term "lobby" may be used to refer to a virtual location where players may gather before, during, or after a game. A lobby may permit players to see who is present and a lobby may permit conversations, or on-line chat amongst players. In one embodiment of the present invention, the lobby may be used prior to starting the game to determine whether all the appropriate players have joined the game before starting.

[0020] The term "interactive display" may be used to refer to a user interface in which the user may control some aspect of the simulation. In one embodiment of the present invention, the interactive display may be a computer screen where a user may be able to choose various items to complete a certain task (e.g., organize elements into an invention and choose to patent the invention). An interactive display may include one or several locations in which the user may interface.

[0021] The interactive patent system of the present invention may provide a game, a training tool, a business strategy tool and the like, based on various user-defined parameters, structures, and processes. These parameters, structures, and processes, as discussed in more details below, may mimic patent systems of particular countries, may deliberately be chosen to simulate alternatives to existing patent systems, or else, may be user-imagined patent system parameters, structures, and processes.

[0022] The interactive patent system of the present invention may also be useful as a tool to study individual reaction time and choices or the reaction time and choices of a large number of users. A database may be kept during the game to keep track of, for example, the time it takes for a user or users to decide on certain actions and which actions are decided upon. This database may be studied at the completion of the simulation, or even during the simulation, to help determine individual or group reaction to various events of the game. This can be incorporated along with the game theory, to study the choices of individuals and groups/subgroups. In addition, there could be a feedback loop in which the analysis of the database could dynamically alter the parameters, structures and processes of the system.

[0023] The users can have a bank account (or other types of value, score, points, credit, or currency) portable from one simulation to another, or just for one simulation. The accounting system and simulation can be incorporated in Second Life, or other single-user or multi-user games or virtual environments. One option is use of open source for the system, so that contributions come from the users' community or groups.

[0024] In addition to use in games, virtual environments, research tools and other simulations, this invention could also be utilized in real world contexts. For example, a real country could adopt a patent system in which the parameters, structures, and processes of the system are dynamically adjusted to achieve one or more specific benefits. For example, a country might cause the length of protection to be dynamically specified to offer greater or lesser protection in order to insure that the load on their patent examiners and the turn-around time were both maintained within reasonable levels, or they can gauge the effects of different IP-related variables on the economy and social benefits.

[0025] In one embodiment, PatentSim™ includes an option of making an invention "open source". An open source invention could, optionally, be available for use by any user without restriction, could be patentable or unpatentable, and any invention incorporating such an open source invention could itself be patentable or unpatentable, and/or could be used by any user willing to agree to the terms of a license (e.g., a variation of the GNU General Public License ("GPL") or Berkeley Software License ("BSD").

[0026] PatentSim™ may use an abstract and cumulative model of potential innovations, a database of potential innovations, an interactive interface that allows users to invent these innovations and a network over which users may interact with one another. Users can potentially cooperate or compete by recombining simpler inventions into more complex and powerful combination inventions, in a setting such as stock market, E-Bay/auction, or idea laboratory. They may also license, buy, lease, rent, and sell patents to each other. The system may be implemented using an online server and the Ruby on Rails web application framework or via many different programming languages.

[0027] The license of patent could be geographical-based or time-based, with expiration, which requires a clock to show the time to the user, plus a map to show which region in the world it is licensed for. The license can include other information, such as specific application, field-of-use, or purpose. For example, a patented encryption method can be used for video content, but not text. Thus, the menu has different options, for the licensing, to carve out the slices and pieces (limitation parameters), for the license intended, which can limit the scope of license, for a lower price/fee. The other option is being exclusive or non-exclusive license, which also shows overlap of the coverage, and can affect the competing products and companies.

[0028] One embodiment is the patent pooling option, wherein the number of patents in a jurisdiction (e.g. a US patent) will be counted, and the ratio of the number from contributors of the pool to the total number determines the percentage. In another option, patent applications have lower weights, e.g. a fraction of 1 or 100 percent. In another embodiment, a broad patent has more weight, more than 1 (normalized value), than a narrow or normal patent. Thus, a separate value tracks the broadness or scope of the claims or patents. Another option is for the jurisdiction that uses the product, or the jurisdiction that manufactures the product.

[0029] Another option is crossing between different jurisdictions for patents in different areas. It may infringe patents in 2 or more countries. If a product infringes 2 patents by 2 owners, they may need both licenses. For example, one may manufacture a car, which needs license for headlights and tires, from their respective patent owners.

[0030] Another option is assigning a patent to another entity. Another option is that the system does not let the user go negative in the budget. For example, if the user cannot pay the maintenance fee for the patent during the term of the patent, as shown by the clock/calendar on the screen, the patent becomes public domain, and goes to the list of available technologies, for free.

[0031] Another option is assigning or selling a patent to another entity, such as a third company or public, to devastate the competition. Another option is sublicensing of an original patent, or cross-licensing between two or more companies, wherein money may or may not exchange hands, depending on the absolute values and relative values of the patents.

[0032] Another option is prosecution modeling or appeal (procedures at different stages) modeling of the system, so that attorney cost, time axis, and different outcomes for the appeal/various papers and actions are parameters that can be adjusted, studied, and simulated. The menu has an option